

February 7, 2000

Wendy R. Dixon, EIS Project Manager
 Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
 Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
 U.S. Department of Energy
 P.O. Box 30307, M/S 010
 North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

RECEIVED

FEB 14 2000

Dear Ms Dixon:

I am just learning about the intentions of the D.O.E. to establish a radioactive waste storage facility at Yucca Mountain in Nevada. It is my understanding that radioactive waste from some seventy reactor sites around the United States would be transported by truck and by train to this burial vault under the Nevada desert. I also read that there could be anywhere from 15,000 to as high as 80,000 shipments over a 30-year period. At the same time, I note that the scientific community has declared that Yucca Mountain is unsuitable as a storage site since it is in the center of a very active earthquake zone.

The question comes my to mind: Who is in control at the D.O.E., and what is she/he thinking? Am I supposed to believe that the D.O.E. doesn't realize how dangerous it would be to have thousands of trains and trucks crossing this country with material that is so deadly that, if it were ever accidentally, or purposely, released, it could occasion a catastrophe worse than the U.S. has ever experienced? And does the D.O.E. think the citizenry of this country are so dumb that they don't realize that it is they who will be paying for this scheme--paying for the privilege of playing a game that has all the appearances of nuclear roulette?

One thing I am aware of is that most of this radioactive waste is coming from the nuclear power industry, which is, apparently, still operating on the principle of "act first--think later", a principle that has governed much of the industrial age. "Use up the resources, get out the product, and let someone else worry about the aftermath." Only now are we, the public, arriving at the point where are demanding that industry be responsible for the mistakes it makes and the waste it creates. And "being responsible" does not imply that industry puts all its efforts into taking the easy way out; rather it implies that they think first, then act only "after" they have worked out what to do with waste products. What that further implies is that, if you don't know what to do with your waste, you don't go into business. I would think it should be the job of agencies like the D.O.E. to avoid the government having to get involved in this kind of problem in the first place.

There can be no other way to get out of this dilemma of an overload of nuclear waste than by putting a halt to its production and requiring the nuclear industry to clean up its own backyard. That is what your agency should be working on rather on developing plans for a costly and extremely dangerous hauling procedure (what some people have aptly termed Mobile Chernobyl) that will, without a doubt, sock it to us taxpayers again. Please (!) take the sensible approach and give us some comfort that you are on our side and not at the beck and call of industry.

Bill Mc Cormick
 3425 N. Clubcrest #3
 Cincinnati, OH 45209

①